

## MEMORANDUM

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*To:* Heritage Preservation Commission

*Prepared By:* Hilary Dvorak, Principal City Planner, (612) 673-2639

*Date:* August 10, 2021

*Subject:* Upper Harbor Terminal, 3800 1st St N, 2 36th Ave N, 51 36th Ave N, 51 34th Ave N, 3360 1st St N, 3700 Washington Ave N, 3648 Washington Ave N, 3701 Washington Ave N, and 3639 Washington Ave N

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### **The Project (<http://upperharbormpls.com/>)**

United Properties, in partnership with First Avenue Productions, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), and the City of Minneapolis, is proposing to redevelop the 53-acre Upper Harbor Terminal site into a mixed-use development. The proposed development would include residential, hospitality, retail/service, office/employment, light industrial, an outdoor community performing arts center, and 19.5 acres of parkland. Redevelopment of the site would include new infrastructure, including water service, sewer, stormwater, streets, sidewalks, trails, and other utilities, and most of the new services would be extensions to existing infrastructure or upgrading existing systems to support the new land uses. There are also existing overhead high transmission powerlines that bisect the riverfront parcels on the southern half of the site. As part of the redevelopment, these would be relocated towards the western edge of those parcels, along the railroad tracks. Redevelopment of the site will require demolition of some of the existing buildings and structures.

### **Brief Background of the Site**

The Upper Harbor Terminal site is located on the western bank of the Mississippi River in North Minneapolis. The site is generally bounded by 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue North on the north, the Mississippi River on the east, 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North on the south, and the CP Rail/2<sup>nd</sup> Street North/I-94/1<sup>st</sup> Street North on the west.

The Upper Harbor Terminal site was part of an 1851 Treaty with the U.S. Government and there may be Native American history associated with it.

Uses prior to development of the site as a barge terminal included lumber yards and mills and, later, commercial gardens. The portion of the site between Washington Avenue North and I-94 had included some homes and small commercial/industrial structures before being acquired and cleared by the Minnesota Department of Transportation for construction of I-94. The cleared parcels subsequently were conveyed to the City as excess highway right-of-way and added to the Upper Harbor Terminal site.

Between 1968 and 1987, the Upper Harbor Terminal site was developed as an inter-modal barge shipping terminal located at almost the head of commercial navigation on the Mississippi River. The barge terminal remained in operation until the end of 2014 when barging ceased due to the planned closure of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock in spring of 2015. The site operation then shifted to interim use to store commodities that are trucked to and from the site.

## Past Studies

The Upper Harbor Terminal has been previously evaluated for National Register eligibility and potential local historic designation as a historic district through three earlier studies:

*Gales, Elizabeth. "Upper Harbor Historic District and Upper Harbor Terminal: Survey and Reevaluation for Historic Eligibility," August 2020. Prepared for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and City of Minneapolis, Community Planning and Economic Development.*

*Foss, Nicole, and Saleh Miller. "Intensive Architecture/History Evaluation for the Upper Harbor Terminal, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota." April 2017. Prepared by the 106 Group for Community Planning and Economic Development, City of Minneapolis.*

*Berg, Erin Hanafin. "Upper Harbor Terminal." Inventory form, September 2007. Available at Hess, Roise and Company, Minneapolis.*

The studies concluded that the Upper Harbor Terminal, inclusive of its Monolithic Domes, were not eligible for listing in the National Register; however, were eligible for local historic designation as a historic district, with the domes as potential individual landmarks. In February 2021, the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concluded that the Upper Harbor Historic District, of which the Upper Harbor Terminal is a contributing resource, is eligible for listing in the National Register as a large, multi-site historic district. However, the SHPO concurred with the 2020 report that the Upper Harbor Terminal itself, is not eligible for National Register listing as a historic district on its own.

The three studies have compiled a large amount of research on the Upper Harbor Terminal already, including a full resurvey of the 13 buildings, 17 structures, six sites, and six objects within the boundaries of the industrial site, including contributing and non-contributing resource recommendations. The resurvey was conducted in August 2020 by Hess Roise and Company and was completed on Minnesota Individual Property Inventory Forms, as well as a Minnesota Multiple Property Inventory Form.

Under local eligibility criteria, the 2020 Hess Roise report and the 2017 106 Group report, recommended the Upper Harbor Terminal as a potential historic district under three of the seven criteria for local designation contained in Chapter 599.210 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, specifically Criterion 1, 3, and 4. The reports also recommended the four Monolithic Domes at the Upper Harbor Terminal as potential historic landmarks under two of the seven criteria for local designation, Criterion 3 and 4.

## **Environmental Review ([Upper Harbor Terminal - City of Minneapolis \(minneapolismn.gov\)](https://www.minneapolis.gov/minneapolis-projects-and-improvements/upper-harbor-terminal))**

The City is currently conducting an environmental review for the proposed redevelopment. The State of Minnesota requires environmental reviews on proposed developments of a certain size and scale. The proposed redevelopment meets the requirements to complete an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR), which is a planning tool that cities use to understand how different development scenarios will affect the environment of their community before development occurs. The AUAR process is a hybrid of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) review processes. As part of this process and as noted above, the City has been in consultation with the SHPO regarding the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of the Upper Harbor Terminal site.

As part of the NRHP eligibility evaluation of the Upper Harbor Historic District, Nienow Cultural Consultants completed a Phase 1a archaeological literature review of the Upper Harbor Terminal site. According to the

Phase 1a, based on “available historic maps, drawings, and images for the project area, there is the potential for multiple historic cultural resources dating back as far as the 1880s. Given the project area’s proximity to the Mississippi River, which acted as a corridor for travel and exchange in Native American cultures for thousands of years, there is potential in undisturbed areas to encounter Native American features across the project area as well.”

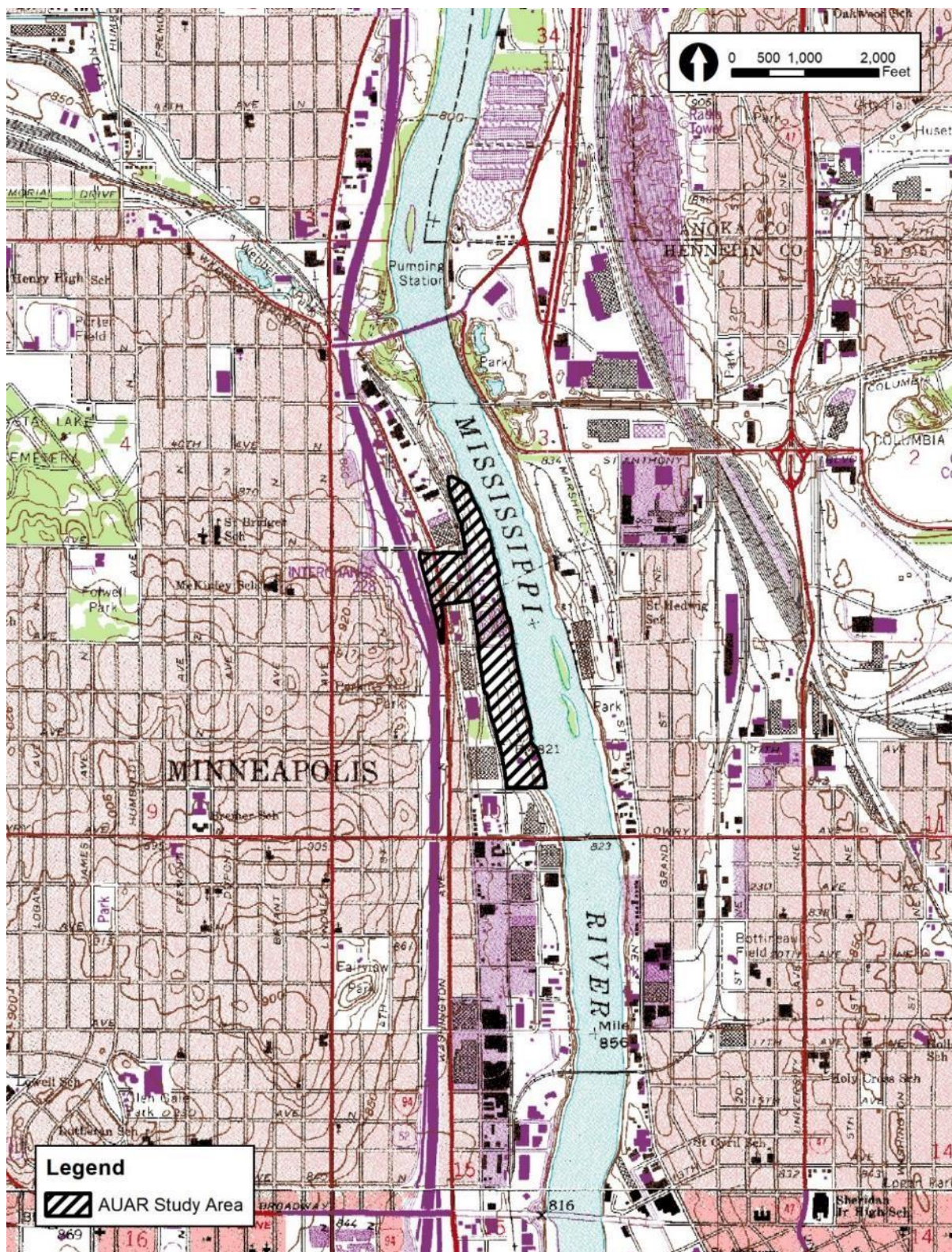
### **Next Steps**

As concluded by the SHPO, the site is not eligible for National Register listing as a historic district on its own. However, the Upper Harbor Terminal site has been identified as potentially eligible as a local City of Minneapolis historic district. Through a third-party historic consultant, the City is conducting a historic evaluation of the Upper Harbor Terminal site under local designation criteria. The study the City is preparing will focus only on evaluating the Upper Harbor Terminal as a local historic district and the Monolithic Domes as individual landmarks under the City’s local evaluation criteria. The demolitions will be brought before HPC with the results of the district evaluation at a future date.

At this time, the City is looking for any comments, concerns, or questions on the project, the site, or any of the studies being conducted.



USGS Map: Upper Harbor Termianl location

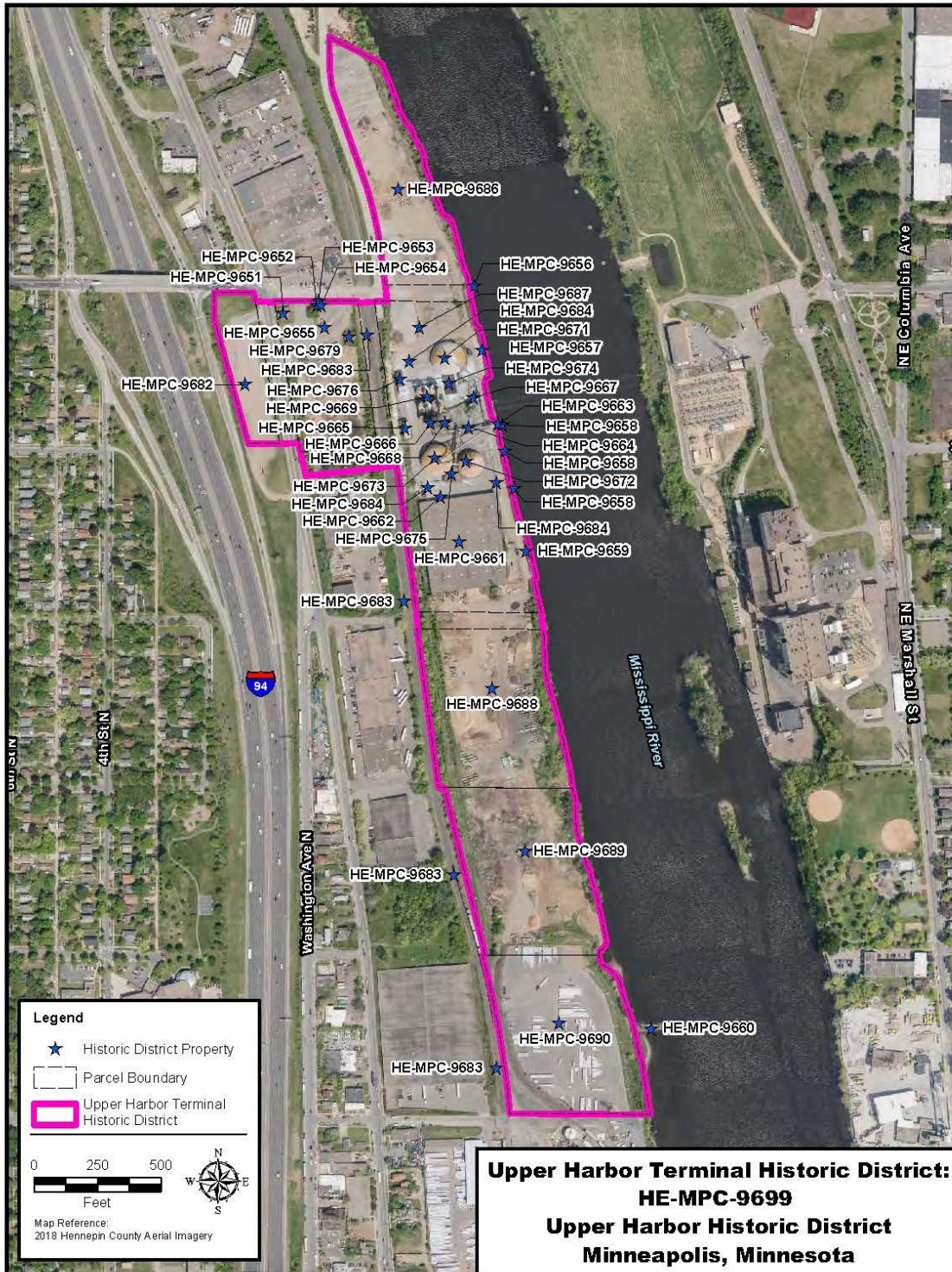




Upper Harbor Termainl location







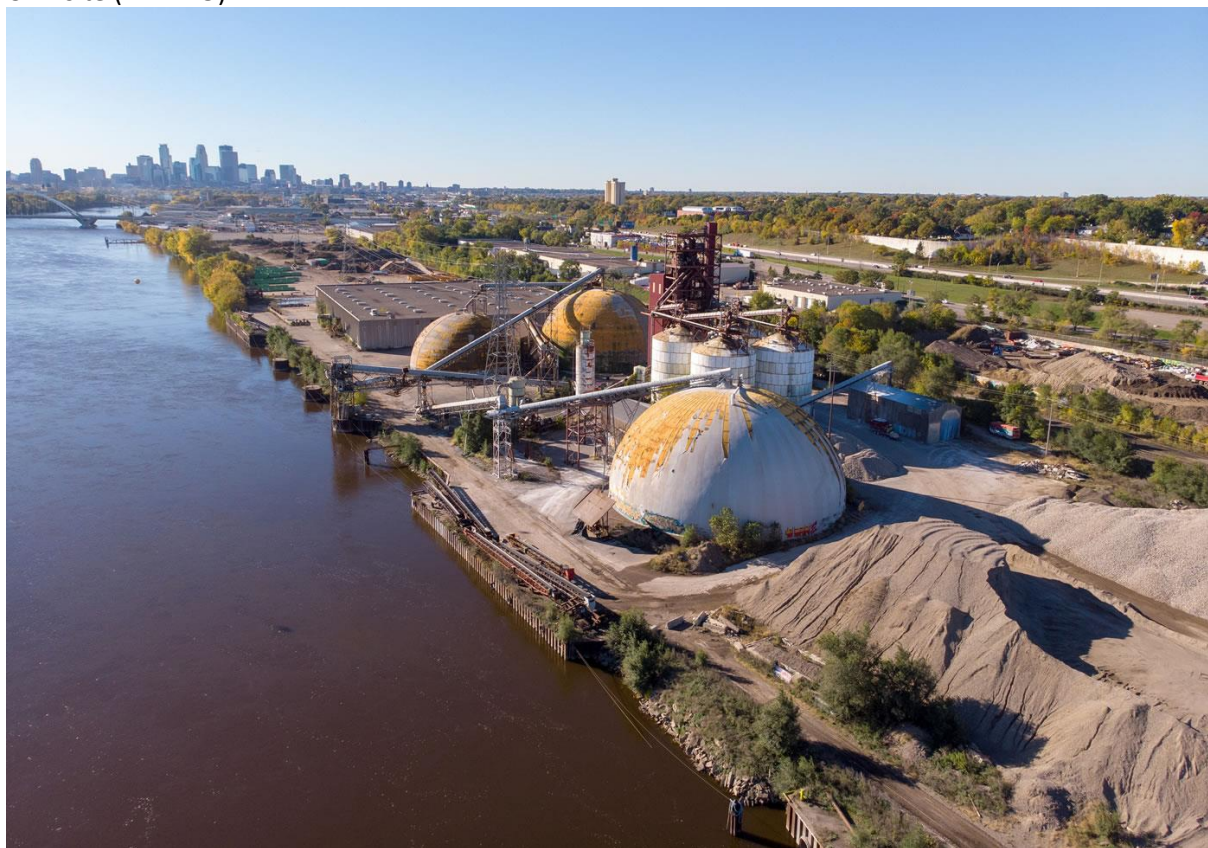
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UHT site – photo taken from the Riverside Plant



UHT site (MWMO)



UHT Grain Elevator and Conveyor Complex





Development Overview from the Draft Coordinated Development Plan

